

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 and 22-24 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 13-21 are cancelled and claim 1 is amended. Claims 8, 9, 11, 12, 20 and 21 have been previously withdrawn from consideration.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance (for the reasons discussed herein); (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration (since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution); (c) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; (d) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims; and (e) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

Reconsideration based on the following remarks is respectfully requested.

I. The Election Requirement

As pointed out in the February 25, 2002 Election Requirement, claim 1 is a generic claim. Applicant respectfully requests that non-elected claims 8, 9, 11, 12, 20 and 21 be rejoined and allowed upon the allowance of generic claim 1.

II. The Specification Satisfies All Formal Requirements

The Office Action objects to the Title as not being descriptive. The Title is replaced with a new Title to obviate the objection. Withdrawal of the objection to the Title is respectfully requested.

III. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 1-7, 10, 16, 19 and 22-24 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Buck et al. (European Patent No. 0057253 A2); claims 1-7, 10, 16, 19 and 22-24 under

35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Kunio (Japanese Patent Application No. 4-162440) in view of Buck; claims 1-7, 10, 16, 19 and 22-24 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Hirota (Japanese Patent Application No. 5-121486) in view of Buck; claims 1-7, 10 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Hutchison et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,132,856) in view of Buck; claims 16, 19 and 22-24 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Hutchison in view of Buck; and claims 16, 19 and 22-24 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Buck. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As a preliminary matter, the Office Action erroneously characterizes claims 22-24 as "product by process" claims. Claims 22-24 recite steps of a method, and thus are method claims. Thus, the patentability of the claims 22-24 must be determined based on the steps of the method recited in those claims, not on the final product produced by the method.

None of the applied references disclose or suggest a flexible interconnect substrate including, inter alia, a first region in which a portion of the interconnect pattern has been formed and which will form a unit when separated from the base substrate, wherein the whole portion of the interconnect pattern in the first region extends across the widthwise direction of the base substrate, as recited in claim 1.

As shown in Fig. 1 of the present application, for example, the end portions 34 and 36, and the inner leads 26 and 28 extend across the widthwise direction of the base substrate. The oblique portions 30 and 32 also extend across the widthwise direction of the base substrate although they extend in an oblique direction.

In accordance with the present invention, the whole interconnect pattern in the first region resists the force to bend the base substrate in the first region when the tap-shaped substrate is wound.

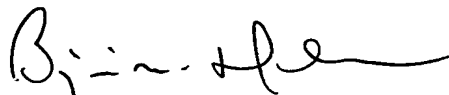
In contrast, Buck, for example, discloses an interconnect pattern having its portion extending just in the widthwise direction of the base substrate. Further, Hutchison discloses ground straps 30 extending just in the widthwise direction of the base substrate. Similarly,

neither Hirotaka nor Kunio disclose the whole portion of the interconnect pattern in the first region extends across the widthwise direction of the base substrate.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-12 and 22-24 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Benjamin M. Halpern
Registration No. 46,494

JAO:BMH/vgp

Date: June 3, 2003

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

<p>DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE AUTHORIZATION Please grant any extension necessary for entry; Charge any fee due to our Deposit Account No. 15-0461</p>
--